

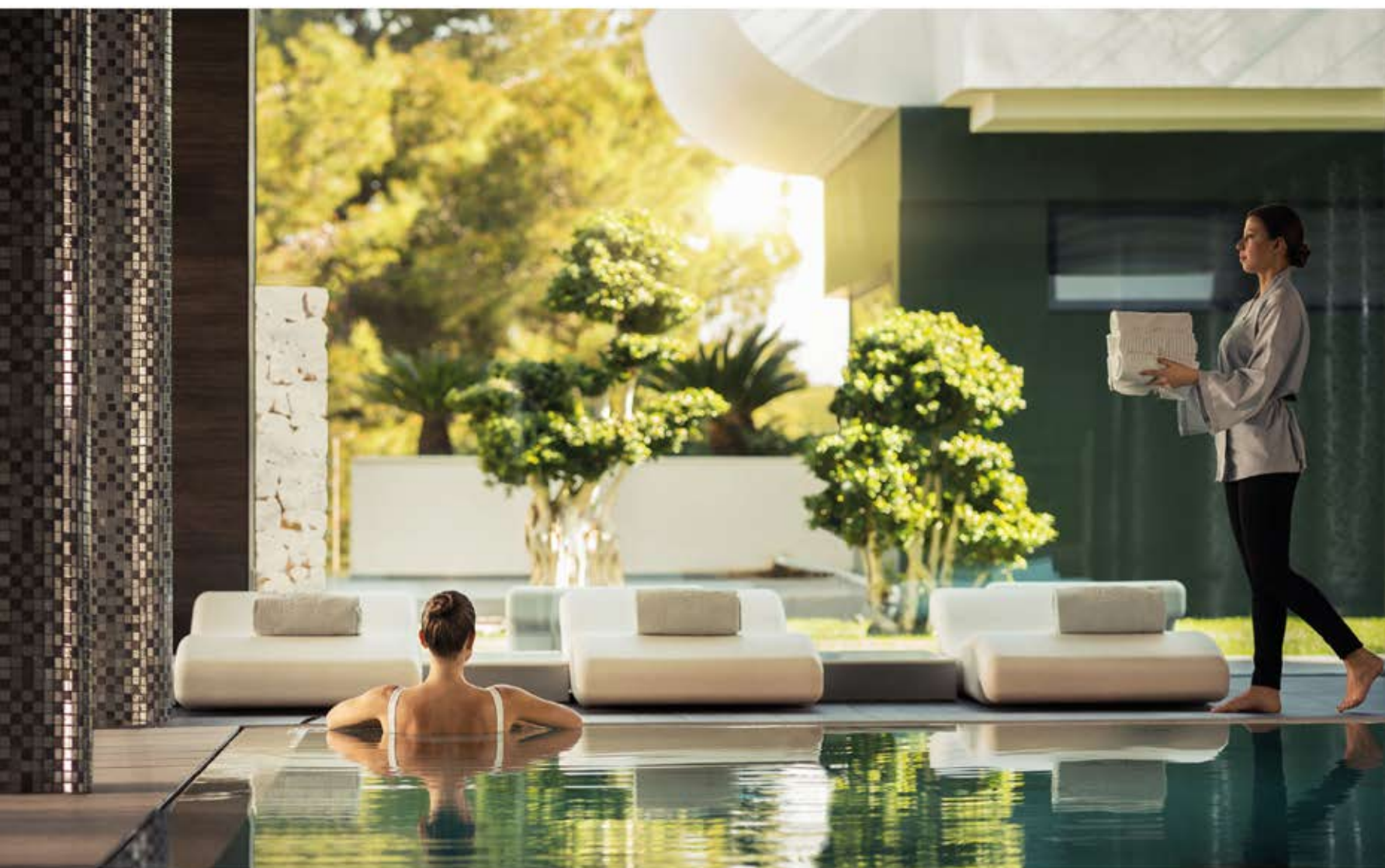
europaean Spa

THE NO.1 MAGAZINE

FOR SPA AND WELLNESS



Issue 54 | October/November 2016 | www.europeanspamagazine.com



BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL

Health is the new wealth at
SHA Wellness Clinic, Spain

THERMAL EXPERTISE

Our guide to maximising your
hydro-thermal spa space

FROM MOTHER EARTH

The birth of the Gaia spa brand
at Boringdon Hall, UK

AUSTRIA'S EVOLUTION

A holistic history of the Global
Wellness Summit's host nation

Standing at a crossroads

As Susan Harmsworth, MBE, prepares to address the Global Wellness Summit 2016, she writes that a redefining of spa specialisms is necessary to future-proof the industry



We are at a stage in the history of spa where the need for all we provide has never been greater – but now it is time to redefine the concepts that characterise the industry. While the past 15 years has seen spa successfully evolve into an established global offering, it is still changing fast in a world where consumers are so engaged they are almost ahead of the industry.

From knowledgeable and proactive wellbeing visitors who know what they want and will travel far and wide to find it, to transient spa guests still seeking luxurious relaxation with high-end expectations; consumers now instinctively connect with brands, people, products and places that provide a far deeper understanding of what truly touches their life.

Future-proofing city spas will entail the sub-letting of treatment rooms to provide

speciality services, from osteopathy and nutrition to medical practices and men’s services. Needless to say, experts come at a premium, but add-on services from specialised practitioners will be a hugely significant part of the new city-spa structure.

I have many resort spas currently under construction all over the world and already see various levels of change in this area. Four and five-star, individually-owned operations can pioneer new methodologies and social wellbeing with an agility that big corporates just can’t achieve.

The less transient resort spa audience is able to engage more deeply with elements such as sleep workshops, personal learning and mindfulness journeys, which become blended with the entire resort ethos. Again, a new era of specialisation means we must ensure absolute first-class standards of delivery throughout Europe.

A new era of targets and talent

One of the biggest challenges set to hit the industry will be the demand for uniquely-qualified, highly-trained professionals. We will need a whole new generation of experts – pure specialists who balance high-level training across Europe with dedication to spa wellbeing.

Training will be vital, not just in terms of creating spa journeys and establishing protocols, but in bonding a whole team that can anticipate a guest’s underlying requirements. We’re not talking about therapists and product commerciality, but instilling the professional confidence to treat clients as part of an authentic, integrated approach.

Going forward, the various elements of industry will need to redefine their roles. Hotel spas will worry about wellbeing resorts, and where does the medical sector fit? Lasers, fillers and non-surgical treatments require professionals, while invasive and more advance medical procedures won’t work in the hotel spa sector and cannot be taken on a spa break. We simply cannot be all things to all people – so if you are unable to do something well, then don’t do it at all – the consumer is far too aware of anything inauthentic that will dilute their wellbeing.

Industry transformations such as these usually evolve over three years, and Europe is just ahead of the game – so let’s see this amazing driving force take full effect. ●●●●●

Susan Harmsworth was talking to Hellena Barnes

Susan Harmsworth, MBE, is founder and chairman of the international award-winning ESPA brand, with a portfolio spanning 500 bespoke and destination spas in 60 countries. Awarded an MBE for services to the spa and beauty industry, she will be co-chair of the 2016 Global Wellness Summit in Austria, from October 17-19. www.espa-consulting.com | www.globalwellnesssummit.com

